

K E V O ' S

Boating Tips

Batten Down The Hatches!

I'd been looking forward to this for months. Mr. G, one of my many VIP clients, and I were going to have a great time on the Delta for the weekend. The agenda included skiing, tubing and touring the Delta.

It was a typical summer day on the Bay in late July (windy in the AM and predicted to get worse in the PM). I arrived at Mr. G's yacht for a scheduled 11 a.m. departure. My (written) float plan was to drive his boat from the Bay to Moore's Riverboat restaurant on the Delta (and back four days later), then get it all set for Mr. G to arrive with his entourage by limo later that day.

I asked the assistant assigned to look after the boat if it was ready for departure. He assured me that all was ready. I arrived, fired up that puppy, secured all lines and fenders and headed toward San Pablo Bay. The tide was going out and the seas were uncharacteristically calm.

Just after I passed Pt. Richmond, the wind came up out of the south-east and the seas grew to 3 feet on my starboard beam. It got worse as I entered upper San Pablo Bay. This is not unusual and has been known to take experienced mariners by surprise. I've found over the (many) years traversing from the Bay to the Delta that upper San Pablo Bay is very unpredictable and should be respected by all mariners.

I made it to the Carquinez Straights and the conditions calmed down a bit, then right at the Benicia Bridge the wind and waves gained strength again and I had to slow down for safety. I passed a freighter negotiating a hairpin turn (for the freighter) right in front of the Mothball Fleet and marveled at the precision in which our NorCal bar pilots navigate large ships to and from the Delta. I mean, this guy/gal was threading the needle seriously!

The seas and wind didn't calm down until I reached Pittsburg. I stopped to refuel and ate a sandwich at the dock. Pittsburg Marina has the least expensive fuel in the area (historically) and the facilities are very nice and accommodating. (We used to berth *Her Way* there.)

Next I headed east on New York slough, finally getting some calm water and a nice ride. Everything went fine and I tied up and plugged in at the Riverboat. Next, I got our boat out of the shed next door and tied up next to Mr. G's boat. Now I had a few minutes to relax and enjoy the view from the cockpit of our boat. (Great view!)

Mr. G arrived on schedule and proceeded to board his vessel and relax with a cold drink. We had dinner at the Riverboat where Trudy Meeker and her staff along with the live band made sure we had a great time well into the evening hours.

Saturday morning was beauti-



BY KEVIN O'LEARY

ful. The temperature was in the low 80s at 9 a.m. and it looked like a great day to ski/wakeboard/swim/tube. However, Mr. G was royally pissed. (I'll get to that later.)

Stefan Burdt, our host with the ski boat, arrived right on time at 10 a.m. His mission was to take our group around the Delta Saturday and Sunday and find great water to ski on. And ski we did. I was designated as the line/flag/retrieve ski guy. No worries. I have a torn meniscus in my right knee and my wife (The Admiral) had threatened to throttle my neck if I did anything stupid during the weekend. What. ME? HA!

The day went great! Mr. G and his entourage skied and had a grand time. We stopped in to see Trisha Molnar in her new digs at Windmill Cove, had a drink and Stefan got in a game of volleyball before we departed for lunch at Garlic Brothers at Village West Marina. This is where we met a Jimmy Buffett look-alike who actually has a band covering Jimmy Buffett songs and is a close friend of Stefan. To view and listen to these guys go to www.jimmyandthewaverunners.com.

So Mr. G takes a photo with his phone, e-mails it and then calls someone on his cell. (Speed dial.) He says: "Hey, Jimmy, you got to see this



From left, George Wilkie (Jimmy Buffett look-alike), Brandi the boat dog and Stefan Burdt, ski instructor extraordinaire.

guy who looks and sings like you.” We all looked at each other like, whoa, this guy is connected.

After 8.5 hours on the ski boat, we settled back in to the motherships back at the Riverboat and had a few cocktails. Then it was off to dinner, drinks and dancing to a great live band. We played pool in the area Trudy named the “Back Bar” until about midnight and then packed it in for the night.

The next morning Mr. G was pissed off again! (I’ll get to that later.) We all had breakfast and headed out for another day of fun in the sun on the Delta. The water was perfect and the skiing was great. We skied all the way down to Discovery Bay and had a great lunch at the Boardwalk restaurant, located at the end of A dock in the marina.

After that we had to boogie back to the motherships to get Mr. G and his entourage back to his humble abode at a reasonable time. My understanding is they all slept the whole way home.

Now, let’s get back to Mr. G being angry two mornings in a row. If you are ever lucky enough to land a

VIP client like Mr. G for any reason, take good care of him/her. He/she will recognize your efforts and reward you. If you screw up by leaving the porthole in the master suite above the bed open for a delivery to the Delta from the Bay, allowing the entire suite to get soaking wet, you could be in trouble. Such was the case with Mr. G & me. After he got through reaming my (stern), he whacked \$\$\$\$ off the bill.

Kevo’s Tip:

Check all hatches/windows/portholes and anything else you can find to stop the inflow of water on all voyages. Just because the beginning of a voyage starts out calm, it does not indicate the conditions farther along or upon your return will be the same. Don’t forget head portholes and other unexpected places water can come in and dampen your nautical experience. HA!

Be safe & happy boating!

As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at 925/890-8428 or kevo@yachtsman magazine.com. ☞



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